

# **Preventive Alcohol Education Program**

## **Brief Program Description**

Inoculation theory proposes that an individual will better resist persuasive, threatening arguments if s/he learns the argument's content and strategy beforehand. The Preventive Alcohol Education Program was developed utilizing the tenets of inoculation theory. The two most fundamental tenets of the theory were not varied in the program: 1) that participants be forewarned, or pre-exposed, to the external threats by examining their content, strategy, and rationale before actual contact with them; and 2) that the subjects own vulnerability to attack, or persuasion, be made known to them.

This strategy of forewarning has been successfully used by various organized religions to inoculate members against the persuasive appeals of threatening groups. Lawyers are another example of persons with expertise in utilizing the logic of inoculation. In essence, the inoculation procedure lessens the persuasive impact of the opposing parties' argument. In the present preventive alcohol education program, students are forewarned of pro-drinking and driving arguments, given practice systematically refuting those appeals, provided with evaluative feedback on their refutations, and later administered brief booster sessions utilizing new, never-before-heard, pro-drinking arguments.

## **Program Strategies**

The program consisted of four components: 1) question-and-answer sessions; 2) verbal role playing simulations; 3) nonverbal role playing simulations; and 4) evocative slide show presentation.

The question-and-answer session between class and instructor covered major misinformation youth have regarding alcohol consumption and human performance. Students then participated in a variety of in-class role-plays (using both verbal and nonverbal resistance strategies) where students read from prepared and "improvisational" scripts. After each role-play, the teacher provided students with evaluative feedback on their responses to the pressures (i.e., how to better refute or resist such arguments both verbally and using nonverbal signals). The slide show component subsequently reviewed, both, the knowledge and the argument aspects covered in these prior three components.

## **Population Focus**

Participants were students from a southeastern Nebraska high school, none of which had received any prior school-based alcohol education.

**Suitable Settings**

This intervention is suitable for implementation in a junior and/or high school setting.

**Required Resources**

The program requires only the intervention exercises, which are all in print form. The evocative slide show requires a slide projector and screen.

**Implementation Timeline**

The treatment consisted of 1 hour/day for six days.

**Outcomes**

Evaluation of this program revealed the following:

- There was a favorable impact for the treatment group on knowledge, refuting pro-drinking and driving arguments, and tendency to comply in risky alcohol situations.
- There was a favorable impact for the treatment group on the attitude that their drinking and driving may result in serious consequences (perceived susceptibility).
- There was a favorable impact for the treatment group on the attitude that accompanying those who drink and drive may result in serious consequences (perceived severity).

**Contact Information**

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

**Program Developer**

Elias J. Duryea, Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Research

University of New Mexico

106 College of Education

Office of the Dean

Albuquerque, NM 87131-1231

Phone: (505) 277-2925

Fax: (505) 277-7262

Email: [duryea@unm.edu](mailto:duryea@unm.edu)